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Create an Effective Mentoring Program Based on Universal Retention Rates in the United States: A School Improvement Plan

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Create an Effective Mentoring Program Based on Universal Retention Rates in the United States:

A School Improvement Plan

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Abstract

High-quality teachers are shown to be the number-one factor for student achievement (Gujarati, 2012). One way school districts around the world can retain high-quality teachers is to place them in an induction or mentoring program as new teachers. A review of the literature was conducted to support the school improvement plan and examines retention rates across the United States. The research covers these main topics: mentoring, induction, professional development, teacher retention and mobility, new teacher experiences, and teacher evaluation. In response, a school improvement plan was created to establish a high-quality mentoring program outline, which establishes support and direction for new teachers to a district. The plan will support principals, mentors, and new teachers to the district.

Keywords: attrition, retention, mentor programs, induction, and teacher support.

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Create an Effective Mentoring Program based on Universal Retention Rates in the United States

Many teachers across America today are leaving the profession at high rates. “This concern is fueled at least in part from policy reports and media accounts indicating that about 50% of novice teachers ‘flee’ the profession during their first 5 years” (DeAngelis & Presley, 2010, p. 599). As new teachers enter the workforce, they typically are inducted into a mentoring program. Mentoring programs typically range from one to three years and involve a mentor at the school where the new teacher is teaching. Teachers are choosing to leave the profession because of pay, stress, and lack of support. The lack of support is one topic that will be highlighted in this research study. When teachers do not feel supported within their school, they will either look for a different place to teach or quit the profession altogether. The research collected in this literature review is very important because without quality teachers, there is no high-quality education.

The problem is that the United States’ teacher retention rates have continued to decline, especially for the first five years of a teacher’s career. This is true for Ames Community School District in Iowa. In the 2019-2020 and 2020-21 school years, the Ames Community School District had five teachers who were not retained in one of the elementary school buildings for two years in a row. One teacher left Ames Community School District due to not having support in continued learning and professional development for behavior management. Another teacher left because her personal philosophies did not align with the philosophies of the District. Due to such high turnover, the students, staff, and community are impacted negatively. Closing the gap will require better hiring and retention practices to keep quality teachers.

The purpose of this research study is to look at the retention and attrition rates of different groups of teachers throughout the country, which supports the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan will create an induction program that supports high-quality mentoring. The research will look at whether mentor programs help with retention rates. The research question is: are schools able to retain teachers with a high-quality mentoring program?

Reitman and Karge (2019) found the following:

Less than 1% of teachers actually receive what is considered a comprehensive induction, in which new teachers have opportunities to work with other colleagues in learning communities, observe experienced teachers' classrooms, be observed by mentors, analyze their own practice, and network with other novice teachers (p.9).

Research gathered for this literature review included keywords of attrition of teachers, retention of teachers, mentor programs for teachers, and teacher support. Peer-reviewed journal articles within the last 10 years were gathered from the Northwestern DeWitt Online Library. Most of the studies that were gathered were both qualitative and quantitative studies that used questionnaires and surveys to gather data. The literature review is structured by topics rather than consecutive and the themes that emerged during the research were: mentoring, induction, professional development, teacher retention, new teacher experiences, and teacher evaluation.

Existing research has shed light on the impacts of quality mentoring programs which shows high-quality mentoring programs retain teachers. When school districts use mentoring programs, teachers feel supported and are able to collaborate and learn more effectively as a new teacher. The following school improvement plan is an application of the literature to increase the number of teachers that are retained through a high-quality mentoring program.

Literature Review

Mentoring, Induction and Professional Development

In the field of education, schools are seeking the best ways to induct new hires into their districts. The kinds of mentoring programs may have a correlation with retention of novice teachers. Research by Gujarati (2012) found that teachers were better prepared and more confident after a comprehensive induction program, which should last at least two years. He noted that only 33 states have induction programs and only 22 of those are mandated by the state. He found that after induction programs, teachers were half as likely to leave at the end of their first year in the profession. While also increasing retention rates among teachers, induction programs are more cost-effective by not having to keep replacing quality teachers. Gujarati (2012) found that the United States loses an estimated \$2.6 billion to teacher attrition each year.

Kutsyurba (2012) researched the induction and mentorship programs in Canada. He found the reason why some mentoring programs fail is “inappropriate matches, unsuccessful new teacher/mentor dyads, lack of mentors, lack of mentor training, or teacher burnout” (Kutsyurba, 2012, p.238). Like Gujarati’s (2012) research in the United States, Kutsyurba (2012) found in Canada there are jurisdictions that have not implemented induction programs, do not have the funds, or do not require these programs. Kutsyurba (2012) highlights the value and importance of induction programs if they are systematic and comprehensive. Therefore, it is crucial that school districts take the time to create mandatory mentoring or induction programs for teachers to establish personal connections, as well as become more confident and better prepared.

An important factor for retaining teachers is support. Reitman and Karge (2019) conducted a study with 60 teachers that were a part of an induction program. Six themes emerged that demonstrated support strategies for new teachers: individual relationships, pedagogical

knowledge, teacher perception of their perceived competence, mentoring, professional development, and reflection. The report showed 100% retention for all 60 teachers. The teachers reported having felt honor in being a part of the program as well as a feeling of collaboration. Hallam (2012) and her colleagues conducted a study with 23 elementary teachers in their first year. Their study examined the retention rates of two neighboring schools that used two different mentoring models. The findings of the study support the idea that establishing an immediate and close personal relationship with a mentor led to higher retention rates. Durn (2010) confirms that support is a factor in retention. Her results show that support from mentors and other teachers is valuable. The most common response to who the new teachers found most supportive were other teachers. Most new teachers reported that their mentor was helpful within the first year. This shows that school districts need to provide support to new teachers in various ways throughout their first few years of teaching.

Teacher Retention

It is important for school districts to make sure they are constantly evaluating their teacher retention rates. One of the first experiences a teacher has is their student teacher placement. This is an opportunity for a school district to retain their student teachers if they are a good fit. Ronfeldt (2012) researched the schools making the best placements for pre-service placement and what effect this has on teacher retention. He found there was a correlation between schools with high teacher turnover and those with underserved students and poor working conditions. The study found that teachers who were placed in an easier to staff placement were more likely to raise test scores and stay in NYC schools after five years. Ronfeldt (2012) also found there was an association between better retention and achievement gains for teachers who were placed in easier to staff placements. A study by DeAngelis and

Presley (2011) conducted research to understand teacher attrition rates in Illinois schools. They were looking at if attrition rates were an urban or disadvantaged school problem or if it can be looked at on an individual basis. Their results are similar to Ronfeldt (2012), which showed the type of school had an impact on retention rates. DeAngelis and Presley (2011) found that a little more than half of new teachers left their schools in Illinois' highest poverty schools after five years of teaching. This shows there are outside factors and conditions that will impact teacher retention and attrition rates. A study by Lofton (2015) found teachers leaving the profession are the more qualified ones. Public schools in the United States are least attractive to the most talented teachers. This in turn leads to poor quality education for students. Similar to DeAngelis and Presley (2011), she found the highest turnover rates were in the high-poverty, urban, and rural areas. She found poor working conditions was a primary cause for leaving urban schools, also noted by Ronfeldt (2012).

Rose and Sughrue (2020) looked at the alternative routes to earning a teaching certificate, which has provided a solution to the teacher shortages since 1980. They found many positive outcomes for obtaining an alternative certificate. The certificate allowed a fast track for diverse candidates who may not otherwise choose teaching, expedite entry into teaching, and fill less attractive fields. They found some negative effects for obtaining a certificate, such as lack of adequate preparation, limited complexity of coursework, and misconceptions of the nature of the profession. Teacher quality and retention, which both affect student achievement, come into question with the alternative certificate. Their findings showed the biggest support a district could provide to a teacher with an alternative certification was school-leader professional development and differentiated professional development. This study showed there was a gap between the understanding of the needs of the alternative certification teacher and the leader in

the building. A study by Zhang and Zeller (2016) looked at teacher preparation in regards to teacher retention. They studied alternative teacher certification versus a traditional avenue. Their results are similar to Rose and Saughrue (2020), showing that teachers are 25% more likely to continue in the profession after year two, rather than take alternative routes. This shows that long-term retention is worse for alternative routes. Teacher preparation strongly correlates with retention rates, even after year two.

Another study that was conducted in Portugal, by Mendes and Aleluia (2019) looked at if the countrywide hiring of teachers was causing a countrywide shortage or excess of teachers. They realized that when there was a shortage of teachers, there were more unqualified teachers being hired. Alternatively, when there is an excess of teachers, there are less jobs, which discourages the highly qualified teachers from applying. Mendes and Aleluia (2019) found Portugal was not in a unique situation and more countries were having the same issues hiring qualified teachers. Many other countries around the world were not able to find qualified teachers because there was an excess of applicants. Many countries had also seen shortages where they needed to hire unqualified teachers to fill the positions. This showshow hiring and retaining teachers is a worldwide problem.

New Teacher Experiences

New teachers across the United States and worldwide all have different experiences. There are many skills that new teachers need in order to be successful in the profession. A study by Day (2012), looked at individual teachers' lives, their skills, and environments in which they work to see if these factors help teachers flourish and create a positive sense of identity. Day (2012) found a positive sense of belonging in school environments that included: leadership, colleagues, and personal experiences. The negative aspects of teaching come from: workload,

student behavior, and leadership. This is important because both positive and negative experiences can include leadership, which alter a teacher's work environment. Day (2012) found the work environment had a big impact on teacher resiliency. Teachers working in disadvantaged communities are more persistently challenged than others. Aldridge and Fraser (2014) also looked at factors that improve school climate. They found that when a leader is approachable and supported, it contributes to a teacher's job satisfaction. Grissom et al. (2016) also noted that if a school has poor leadership, this may be the single biggest predictor of a teacher remaining in that school. Effective principals will retain quality teachers and will support those teachers in need of assistance. Aldridge and Fraser (2014) found similar results to Day (2012); when teachers have a support system from their colleagues, it influences teacher efficacy. When teachers feel supported by sharing ideas and practices it is beneficial for teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

A study by Doney (2012) looked at the stressors and protective factors that can be linked to resilience for teachers. This was a two-year study looking at four novice secondary science teachers. Her study looked at the same factors as Day (2012) the participants' personal, professional, and contextual lives. She also found the person's working environment is directly related to resilience. If a person is working in a negative environment, it can be inhibited by the settings in which they work. If a person has protective factors like individual skills or creating support systems, it helps counteract negative effects of stress. Only when there has been a significant threat can the process of resilience take place. This shows that teachers in more stressful environments will need to have protective factors in place in order to have resilience; this, in turn, can directly contribute to teacher retention.

Teacher experiences may be different based on economics, race, gender, teacher experience, and more. Carter Andrews et al. (2018) noted that there is a lack of diversity of

teachers in the United States, finding teachers of color represent only 20% of the United States public school teacher population. Black teachers are not the only population who are unrepresented. Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and multicultural teachers are also unrepresented. Carter Andrews et al. (2018) found teachers of color experience toxic work environments that contribute to retention challenges. This study found that there needs to be more attention paid to structural, institutional, and environmental factors in pre-service programs, beginning when teachers of color enter the profession. This needs to happen immediately so they are retained at a higher level. An example of a structural factor is the edTPA, which is an expensive pre-service test for teachers. If candidates cannot afford to take this test, they cannot become a teacher, which is another way to push out teachers of color. A way to retain teachers of color is to make sure they are involved in hiring processes, so they can recommend other qualified teachers of color. The study looked at the need for minority teacher preparation programs as well as diversifying majoring-serving programs.

A study by Grissom et al. (2016) looked at the characteristics of teachers who are more likely to leave the profession than others. Turnover rates are highest for the youngest, less experienced teachers. Grissom et al. (2016) found that in regard to race and ethnicity, black teachers are more likely to move schools, while Hispanic teachers are more likely to leave teaching. They noted females are 25% more likely to quit the profession than males. Lastly, they found marriage and child rearing are highly correlated to turnover rates. However, there are teachers who return to the classroom after their children reach school age.

Lew and Nelson (2016) looked at how new teachers' experiences in teacher education prepared them for critically responsive teaching, classroom management, and classroom assessment. Half of the participants felt that the education program was modest in preparing

them for CRT. They noted that their district did not provide meaningful professional development that supported CRT in the classroom. Participants noted that they had not been adequately prepared for classroom management but have used a variety of management strategies. The participants noted that they did not receive adequate preparation or support to develop quality classroom assessments. Lew and Nelson (2016) found that there is a gap between teacher education curriculum and the actual experience of a new teacher in the areas of culturally responsive teaching, classroom management, and classroom assessments. This can be linked to new teacher turnover and retention rates.

Teacher Evaluation

High-quality teachers are needed in the United States for students to receive high-quality education. Given teacher qualifications, practices, and experiences differ from state to state, it is difficult to determine what makes a high-quality educator. Lewis (2011) looked at teacher characteristics and personal attributes that relate to teacher effectiveness. Lewis (2011) found four attribute groups: caring, resilience, self-efficacy, and management. Unlike other studies, Lewis (2011) found caring to be the most referenced personal attribute, 87.5% of the time. Lewis' (2011) study found high-quality teachers were strongest in management and weakest in planning.

Shepherd and Devers' (2017) study looked at 423 principals throughout Indiana and their satisfaction with recently hired teachers. The highest rated standard is that their new teachers have a belief that all students can learn. The second highest rated standard is a new teachers' concern for non-academic aspects of students' lives and being culturally aware of their students' lives. The lowest scored standards were instructional in nature, the lowest of which was the teacher's implementation of effective assessments. In the schools with the lowest rates of

poverty, principals were most positive regarding the new teachers they had recently hired.

Jacobsen (2013) looked at evaluations of new teachers in Alaska. He noted that Alaska was moving forward with requirements to include student achievement data in the teacher evaluation process. This becomes a challenge for schools as they navigate individual school needs, such as cultural differences, student mobility, and longitudinal data versus a snapshot. This will impact retaining high-quality teachers if professional development is not put in place.

Need for Plan

District Information

ACSD is an urban school district in Iowa, with a population of 4,927 students. The demographics of this district are 75% white, 3.9% black, 14% Asian, 4.1% Hispanic, and 2.5% other. Ames Community School District is the most populous school district in Story County, Iowa. The District consists of one preschool, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The current mentoring program at Ames Community School District consists of a three-tiered teacher leadership approach. It has two District Strategists, Learning Leads (one per elementary and two per high school and middle school), and twenty-one mentors spread across all schools. Some mentors are mentoring multiple teachers in their respective buildings or other buildings. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator, who is one of the two District Strategists, is in charge of leading the mentors and mentees.

At the beginning of the year, the Teaching and Learning Coordinator leads a three-day professional development for the new teachers in the District. This does not include teachers who are new to the District but have otherwise taught in other districts. During these professional development days, the mentors and mentees are given information regarding the District's

policies, evaluation process, teacher portfolio expectations, and other expectations. Typically, the mentors help their mentees get settled into their rooms and help with any necessary set-up for the upcoming school year.

During the school year, the expectation of the mentor is to meet with their mentee at least twice per month for one to two hours. They fill out a post-meeting document, so they can keep track of their communications and any necessary follow up. This allows the Teaching and Learning Coordinator to be able to keep track of the time and content of the meeting. The mentor completes Cognitive Coaching Level I, which is a training for the mentoring program. They set aside time for the mentee to observe their classroom and vice versa. They are to accompany their mentee to monthly professional development sessions led by the Teaching and Learning Coordinator. These professional development sessions are typically based around one of the Iowa Teaching Standards.

District Need

Data was collected from the Human Resources Director, Kristin Johnson (Appendix E). The data shows retention rates from the school years from 2015 to 2021. From the years 2015 to 2018, the retention rates were between 91.34% to 92.86%. This means that around 30 out of 400 teachers each year were lost to resignation or retirement. During the years 2019 to 2021, the retention rates were between 90.1% to 88.47%. The school year 2020-2021 had the lowest rates compared to the previous six school years. Another set of data points were the first-year teacher retainment rates. In 2016, 71.43% of first-year teachers were retained, 87.50% were retained in 2017, 69.23% were retained in 2018. There was no data for 2019, but in 2020, 100% of first-year teachers were retained. This is important to note because while ACSD had the highest retention rate overall in the 2020-2021 school year, they kept all of their first-year teachers. This data

shows that there needs to be more consistency in first-year teacher retention, as well as overall retention rates. This data may show that there is not a strong need for first-year teachers to complete induction at ACDS. However, there may be other factors impacting this particular school year data, negating this conclusion. During the 2020-2021 year, COVID-19 had significant impacts on teachers. Due to changing positions across the District and hiring a new superintendent, the District has not been actively participating in the mentoring program for the past year.

Teacher data was gathered utilizing a Google Forms survey in June 2021 (Appendix C). A total of nine mentors were surveyed out of the 21 mentors in the District. Out of those nine mentors, all were female and six of those had thirteen or more years of experience. Eight of the nine mentors had been trained with Cognitive Coaching. Six of the nine had only been mentors for one to two years. Seven out of the nine stated that the most important thing for shaping their mentoring practice was support from colleagues, but they also stated they continue to learn through professional development. Four of the mentors stated they did not clearly know the expectations of their role. Eight of the mentors expressed that implementing activities to help students form relations and manage behaviors was effective time spent with their mentee. Three out of the nine had teachers who decided not to stay in the field of education with the District. One stated, “the teacher left the district because the practices and behavioral philosophies our district/school was using did not align with her personal philosophy of what is best for children in school” another said, “one of my mentees left the district due to lack of growth in terms of instructional strategies and classroom management” (Appendix G).

Mentee data was collected (Appendix B) to better understand their experience. Six out of the seven mentees only had an hour or less of contact with their mentor each week. Four

expressed that they “somewhat” felt that their relationship with their mentor helped them feel more successful. When asked which part of the beginning of the year training was most beneficial, three shared, “understanding the different communities within the district bus tour and asking questions about the district” and three agreed, “helping set up classrooms in a thoughtful way” (Appendix F). Those new teachers had ideas about the mentoring program which included more structured support, help with curriculum, meet more regularly with their mentors, and classroom observations. The new teachers felt would help them be successful at ACSD, clearly stated expectations for new teachers, PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and behavior expectations, and training over all curriculums. All of the seven new teachers taking this survey are all returning to ACSD next year (Appendix F).

Goals for Plan

The goal for this school improvement plan begins with the hiring of quality mentors at each school and grade level. It is necessary for each new teacher to be placed with a mentor who is at their respective school and grade level. “Previous research has pointed out that mentoring can help increase retention rates, particularly when beginning teachers are matched with mentors who teach in the same grade level, the same subject area, and the same school” (Hallam et al., 2012, p.264). The first part of this plan will include having consistent quality mentoring training prior to being paired with a mentee. Next, the District will need to provide professional development to the new Director of Teaching and Learning, who is in charge of the new teacher mentoring program. It will be the director’s duty to run, plan, and implement the mentoring program. The director will need to provide support for new teachers, such as training, resources and materials, and encourage professional growth. The next step will be for the director to create a differentiated mentoring program for new hires within the District that have already taught

before but will need professional development on expectations for the District, evaluation cycles, PBIS, and more.

Plan Implementation

ACSD ended the 2020-2021 school year without having any new teacher or mentoring training for any teachers. During the 2021-2022 school year, the Director of Teaching and Learning will provide an entire week of new teacher training prior to the beginning of school. The training will include staff that are new to the District, so they understand basic expectations of the District. The District will provide a two-day training for mentor teachers that will be similar to Cognitive Coaching, but will be a shorter version. This will help them feel prepared to start mentoring right away. If mentors have already had the training they will not need to participate, but it will be highly encouraged as a refresher. The District will provide the director, principals, and mentors with an action plan, so they know the three tasks for the year: hiring quality mentors, mentoring program development, and mentor training (Appendix D).

Once students start the school year, the Director of Teaching and Learning will provide mentors with a scope and sequence for the mentoring program (Appendix A). The scope and sequence will allow teachers to understand the goals of each meeting and when they will take place. The mentor will then see how many times during the year they need to observe each other's classrooms, lesson unit planning, as well as observing another mentor teacher in the District. At the end of the year the Teaching and Learning Coordinator will lead an end of the year new staff training that will be differentiated by first-year teachers and teachers new to the District.

A barrier in this school improvement plan is the demand for training new teachers to become mentors. There are obstacles to teachers finding time to observe classrooms. Finding

substitute teachers is also a concern, so there will need to be multiple dates for the training as well as finding support within the building who can substitute for teachers. Another barrier for implementing this school improvement plan is requiring new teachers to complete at least twenty hours of mentoring, as well as complete the new-year training three times during the school year. This can become an issue with making sure all new teachers are completing the hours as well as attending the new teacher training. ACSD mentees completed a Google Forms survey (Appendix B) in June 2020, answering questions about the current mentoring program. Two teachers responded by saying they wished they had more structured time and support from their mentors, as well as meeting regularly with them. This will be addressed in the Scope and Sequence (Appendix A).

Assessment

Teacher data will be gathered utilizing Google Forms surveys in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022. The surveys will match the survey given in June 2020 (Appendix B) in order to compare data. The most important questions will be how often teachers meet, support they felt from their mentor, which part of the beginning of the year training was beneficial, and if any new teachers are leaving and why. Data collected from the survey responses will help guide necessary future steps for the mentoring program at ACSD.

Quantitative data will be collected at the end of the 2021-2022 school year by Human Resources to compare data on retention from the past five years. The goal would be to retain at least 85% of first-year teachers, as well as stay at the 91% retention rate for all teachers for five years or more. If the goal is not met, the Teacher and Learning Coordinator will reflect on survey responses and the reasons why teachers have left the District to reevaluate the structure of the new teacher learning.

Conclusion

ACSD does not currently implement the mentoring program, so it will be important to note the changes that take place once the school improvement plan is implemented. Currently, the District is retaining new teachers at 100%, but there needs to be more data collected over the next five years to see if a strong mentoring program is correlated with retaining teachers.

By implementing this school improvement plan, new teachers to the District will have access to high-quality mentors who are trained to support these teachers. The goal is for the retention of teachers to increase after five years, as well as to establish a support system where teachers can learn and collaborate with one another.

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Appendices**Appendix A****Mentoring Program Scope and Sequence**

August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<p>New teacher orientation. August 16-20.</p> <p>Teachers new to the district meet on August 20.</p>	<p>Sept. 1 *Standard 6 (Demonstrates competence in classroom management.)</p> <p>*Meet for 2 hours outside of school time with mentor</p>	<p>Oct. 6 *Standard 6 (Demonstrates competence in classroom management.)</p> <p>*Teachers will compile artifacts for this standard to share in Nov. meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>Nov. 3 *Standard 3 (Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.)</p> <p>*Observations of each classroom must be done by Dec. 1 meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>Dec. 1 *Standard 2 (Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.)</p> <p>*Teachers will compile artifacts for Standard 2 & 3 for Jan. 5 meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>
Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May/June
<p>Jan. 5 *Standard 4 (Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.) *Teachers will compile artifacts for Standard 4 for Feb. 2 meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>Feb. 2 *Standard 5 (Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.) *Teachers will compile artifacts for Standard 5 for March. 2 meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>March 2 *Standard 1 (Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.) *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>April 6 *Standard 7 (Engages in professional growth.)</p> <p>*Standard 1&7 due for May meeting *Observations of each classroom must be done by May 4 meeting *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>	<p>May 4 & June 6-7 *Standard 8 (Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.)</p> <p>*Due for June 6 *Meet for 2 hours w/ mentor</p>

(Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria, 2018)

Appendix B

New Teacher Survey

1. What educational degree(s)/certification(s) do you hold?
2. Number of years in education
3. During a typical week, about how many hours of contact do you have with your mentor?
4. How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways?
 - a. telephone/texting
 - b. E-mail
 - c. Face-to-face
 - d. Zoom or Virtual meeting
 - e. Group meetings with other new teachers
 - f. Observations of my classroom
 - g. Observations of my mentor's classroom
 - h. Meeting before or after school
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the accessibility of my mentor
6. To what extent has your relationship with your mentor helped you feel more successful?
7. Overall my mentor has been a valuable resource for helping me transition into the school district.
8. Which part of the beginning of the year training for mentees was the most beneficial?
9. What is one thing you would change about the mentoring program at ACSD?
10. What resources or training do you think you would need in order to be successful as a new teacher at ACSD?
11. Are you returning to ACSD next year?
12. Will you provide a reason why you are not returning, if you are not?

Appendix C

Mentor Survey

1. What educational degree(s)/certification(s) do you hold?
2. Number of years in education
3. How often do you meet with your beginning teacher?
4. Indicate how often you communicated with your beginning teacher(s) in the following ways:
 - a. telephone/texting
 - b. E-mail
 - c. Face-to-face
 - d. Zoom or Virtual meeting
5. Were you trained to be in the mentor program?
6. If yes, please list the training you received.
7. If no, would you be open to mentor training?
8. How many years have you been a mentor at ACSD?

9. How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice?
 - a. Experience as a teacher
 - b. University program
 - c. ACSD professional development
 - d. Mentor training
 - e. Support from colleagues
 - f. District support
 - g. Other professional learning
10. Do you participate in ongoing mentor professional learning?
11. Please rate your agreement with the following statements:
 - a. Overall, the mentoring program has assisted me in developing my mentoring skills.
 - b. I am clear about the expectations for my role.
 - c. My initial training was sufficient to get me started.
 - d. On-going training through mentor professional development has helped me be effective as my job as a mentor.
 - e. Networking with other mentors has been instrumental in helping be a more effective mentor.
12. How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas?
 - a. Classroom observations utilizing observational feedback
 - b. Locating resources and materials
 - c. Lesson/Unit planning
 - d. Classroom observations
 - e. Co-teaching
 - f. Developing meaningful professional goals and student learning growth goals
 - g. Collection and analysis of student data
 - h. Working through challenging situations
 - i. Implementing activities to help students form relationships and manage behaviors
13. To what extent has your relationship with your mentee(s) helped them feel more successful as teachers?
14. Overall, to what degree do you think your mentorship had an impact on your beginning teachers' professional learning?
15. In the past 5 years, have you had a beginning teacher(s) who has decided not to stay in the field of education or has left the district?
16. To the best of your knowledge, what was the reason(s) why the teacher left the field of education or has left the district?

Appendix D

Ames Community School District Mentoring Action Plan

Task	People Responsible	Resources Needed	How it will be accomplished	Completion Date	Evidence
Hire Quality Mentors	Principals and Director of Teaching and Learning	Time for interviews	Principals and Director will conduct interviews with specific questions and qualities in mind	July 2021	Mentors are excited, willing to be trained, and principals have evidence they are leaders in building. Principals will observe mentors to share any feedback with them during the year.
Mentoring Program	Director of Teaching and Learning with help from Mentors	Time scheduled for after school meetings, Standards pacing, supplemental resource ideas from mentors	There will be a week-long new teacher training from August 16-20. The first Wednesday of each month there will be a 2 hour meeting with mentors and mentees. There will be two observation times throughout the year.	June 2022	New teachers to the district will report satisfaction with the mentoring program and will have a retention rate of 91% or higher.
Mentor Training	Cognitive Coaching through AEA & Director of Teaching and Learning	Cognitive Coaching handbook, supplemental support	Mentors will have taken Cognitive Coaching in July-August 2021 and then Cognitive Coaching II throughout the school year. Additional coaching will be provided by the director.	April 2022	Mentors will implement Cognitive Coaching Training with mentees

Appendix E

ACSD Human Resource Data

All Teachers							
Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	*As of 6/7/2021
Resignation	19	16	17	20	31	36	
Retirement	7	13	11	13	9	10	
Total	26/364	30/368	28/372	33/381	40/404	46/399	
	7.14%	8.15%	7.53%	8.66%	9.90%	11.53%	
	92.86%	91.85%	92.47%	91.34%	90.10%	88.47%	
First Year Teachers							
Year		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	*As of 6/7/2021
Retainment		5/7	14/16	9/13	*no data for this year	11/11	
Percent		71.43%	87.50%	69.23%		100%	

*data was presented by Krsitin Johnson, head of HR at ACSD

Appendix F

Mentee Survey

Mentee Survey	What educational degree(s) /certification(s) do you hold?	Number of years in education	During a typical week, about how many hours of contact do you have with your mentor?	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Individual face to face or Zoom meetings]	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Group meetings with other new teachers]	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Observations of my classroom]	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Observation of my mentor's classroom]
	6 BA/BS	4 (1-2 years)	2 (No regular contact)	3 (Seldom or Never)	4 (Seldom or Never)	3 (Seldom or Never)	4 (Seldom or Never)
	1 MA/MS	1 (3-4 years)	4 (One hour or less)	1 (1-2 times a year)	2 (Monthly)	3 (1-2 times a year)	3 (1-2 times a year)
	7 total participants	2 (5-6 years)	1 (3 or more hours)	2 (Monthly)	1 (1-2 times a year)	1 (3-4 times weekly)	
				1 (5 or More Times Weekly)			

How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Meeting before or after school hours]	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [Telephone/Texting]	How often do you work with your mentor in the following ways? [E-mail]	Overall, I am satisfied with the accessibility of my mentor	To what extent has your relationship with your mentor helped you feel more successful?	Overall my mentor has been a valuable resource for helping me transition into the school district.	Which part of the beginning of the year training for mentees was the most beneficial?	What is one thing that you would change about the mentoring program at ACSD?	What resources or training do you think you would need in order to be successful as a new teacher at ACSD?	Are you returning to ACSD next year?
3 (Seldom or Never)	2 (Seldom or Never)	3 (Seldom or Never)	1 Strongly Disagree	4 Somewhat	4 Neutral	1. Understanding the different communities within the district *bus tour, and asking questions about the district (3)	1. More guidance on how to complete portfolio	1. Clearly stated expectations for new year teachers (4)	7/7 yes
2 (1-2 times a year)	1 (Monthly)	2 (Monthly)	1 Disagree	1 Quite a bit	1 Agree	2. (3) Helping set up classrooms in a thoughtful way	2. More structured support and help with curriculum (3)	2. PBIS and behavior expectations	
2 (Monthly)	2 (1-2 times a weekly)	1 (1-2 times a weekly)	3 Neutral	1 A great deal	1 Strongly Agree	3. Setting up portfolio	3. Meet more regularly with mentor with regular classroom observations	3. ALL curriculums that are used at ACSD (3)	
	2 (3-4 times weekly)	1 (3-4 times weekly)	2 Agree						

Appendix G

Mentor Survey Results

Mentor Survey	What educational degree(s) /certification(s) do you hold?	Number of years in education	How often do you meet with your beginning teacher?	Indicate how often you communicated with your beginning teacher(s) in the following ways: [Telephone/Texting]	Indicate how often you communicated with your beginning teacher(s) in the following ways: [E-mail]	Indicate how often you communicated with your beginning teacher(s) in the following ways: [Face to face]	Indicate how often you communicated with your beginning teacher(s) in the following ways: [Zoom or Virtual Meeting]
	4 (BA/BS)	2 (5-8 years)	2 (Every two weeks)	1 (Never)	1 (Never)	5 (Weekly)	5 (Never)
	5 (MA/MS)	1 (9-12 years)	3 (Weekly)	2 (Every two weeks)	1 (Monthly)	4 (Daily)	3 (Monthly)
		3 (13-16 years)	4 (More than once a week)	4 (Weekly)	3 (Every two weeks)		1 (Weekly)
		3 (More than 16 years)		2 (Daily)	3 (Weekly)		
					1 (Daily)		

Were you trained to be in the mentor program?	If yes, please list the training that you received	If no, would you be open to mentor training?	How many years have you been a mentor for ACSD?	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [Experience as a teacher]	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [University program]	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [ACSD Professional Learning]	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [Mentor Training (Cognitive Coaching)]	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [Support from colleagues]	How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [District Support]
8/9	Cognitive Coaching 8/9	1 Yes	6 (1-2 years)	8 (Most Important)	1 (Does not apply)	1 (Not at all)	1 (Does not apply)	2 (Important)	1 (Does not apply)
			1 (3-4 years)	1 (Important)	2 (Not at all)	3 (Somewhat Important)	1 (Somewhat Important)	7 (Most Important)	2 (Somewhat Important)
			1 (5-6 years)		5 (Somewhat Important)	3 (Important)	3 (Important)		3 (Important)
			1 (more than 6 years)		1 (Important)	2 (Most Important)	4 (Most Important)		3 (Most Important)

How important have the following been in shaping your mentoring practice? [Other professional learning]	Do you participate in ongoing mentor professional learning?	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: [Overall, the mentoring program has assisted me in developing my mentoring skills.]	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: [I am clear about the expectations for my role.]	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: [My initial training was sufficient to get me started.]	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: [On-going training through mentor professional development has helped me be effective as my job as a mentor.]	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: [Networking with other mentors has been instrumental in helping be a more effective mentor.]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Classroom observations utilizing observational feedback]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Locating resources and materials]
1 (Does not apply)	5/7 Yes	1 (Does not apply)	4 (Disagree)	1 (Does not apply)	1 (Does not apply)	5 (Agree)	1 (Does not apply)	1 (Does not apply)
2 (Somewhat Important)		1 (Strongly Disagree)	4 (Agree)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)	4 (Strongly Agree)	8 (Effective)	3 (Somewhat effective)
5 (Important)		6 (Agree)	1 (Strongly Agree)	5 (Agree)	2 (Disagree)			5 (Effective)
1 (Most Important)		1 (Strongly Agree)		1 (Strongly Agree)	4 (Agree)			
					1 (Strongly Agree)			

How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Lesson/Unit planning]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Classroom observations]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Co-teaching]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Developing meaningful professional goals and student learning growth goals]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Collection and analysis of student data]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Working through challenging situations]	How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas? [Implementing activities to help students form relationships and manage behaviors]	To what extent has your relationship with your mentee(s) helped them feel more successful as teachers?	Overall, to what degree do you think your mentorship had an impact on your beginning teachers' professional learning?	In the past 5 years, have you had a beginning teacher(s) who have decided not to stay in the field of education or has left the district?	To the best of your knowledge, what was the reason(s) why the teacher left the field of education or has left the district?
2 (Somewhat effective)	1 (Does not apply)	3 (Does not apply)	3 (Somewhat effective)	2 (Does not apply)	9 (Effective)	1 (Somewhat effective)	2 (Somewhat)	2 (Somewhat)	3/9 Yes	The teacher left the district because the practices and behavioral philosophies our district/school was using did not align with her personal philosophy of what is best for children in school.
7 (Effective)	2 (Somewhat effective)	6 (Effective)	6 (Effective)	1 (Somewhat effective)		8 (Effective)	3 (Quite a bit)	5 (Quite a bit)		One of my mentors left the district due to lack of growth in terms of instructional strategies and classroom management.
	6 (Effective)			6 (Effective)			4 (A great deal)	2 (A great deal)		